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Introduction

Western Art Music in Japan: A Success Story?

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Japan's successful modernization on Western premises, in the second half of the nineteenth century, included the introduction and adoption of Western music. So thorough was the appropriation of Western art music that by the mid-twentieth century it had a dominant position comparable to that in the countries of its origin. On a worldwide level, Japan was already a major consumer of Western art music by the 1930s, a fact that is reflected in the number both of gramophone recordings sold in Japan and of leading artists who included Japan on their international tours. After 1945 Japan became an export country for musical instruments, sound technology and even musical pedagogy, in particular the 'Suzuki Method' and the Yamaha music schools. Further influence came from the many Japanese musicians active in orchestras and conservatoires around the world.

Meanwhile, indigenous music was increasingly marginalized, and today it has a niche existence. Even contemporary popular music owes as much to Western music as to Japanese. Measured against the aims of the government officials who, after the Meiji Restoration of 1868, made the decision to systematically import Western music and disseminate it through the military and the education system, this development can be described as a success. Their decision was motivated not by aesthetic considerations, but by the recognition of music's functions in the nations of the West, including its role in ceremonies representing the power of the modern nation-state and in contributing to physical, moral and aesthetic education in schools. The introduction of Western music cannot be separated from the political, military, economic and social reforms enacted by the Meiji government.¹ The educational elite had their own, non-musical, reasons for promoting Western music, as illustrated by their intensive reception of Beethoven and Wagner at a time when most of their music could not be heard in Japan.² The appeal of Western music for reasons other than its intrinsic musical value is not limited to Japan. Karl Signell, comparing

¹ A good introduction to the history of modern Japan, including the Meiji reforms, is Andrew Gordon, *A Modern History of Japan: From Tokugawa Times to the Present*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009 (2003)).

² NISHIHARA Minoru, 'Gakusei' Bētōven no tanjō [The birth of Beethoven as the great master of music] (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 2000); Toru TAKENAKA, 'Wagner-Boom in Meiji-Japan', *Archiv für Musikwissenschaft* 62/1 (2005): 13–31.

Japan and Turkey, observes that for both countries Western music represented 'part of a desired package'.³

It would, be wrong, however, to see the introduction of Western music simply as a question of power politics: the threat of Western encroachment is not sufficient to explain the zeal with which Japan adopted Western culture. As Jürgen Osterhammel points out in his world history of the nineteenth century, 'no one forced the Egyptians to found newspapers, and the Japanese to listen to Gounod or Verdi'. He refers to 'more complicated, non-imperial processes' in the worldwide dissemination of a Western-style press and Western music, by which tastes are exported but also imported and acquired independently of imperial or domestic official political agendas.⁴

In the case of Japan, the political agenda included ambitions to promote Western music as an art form and ultimately to create a 'national music' that combined the best of Western and Japanese music. This, perhaps the most elusive of aims, was not reached, at least not in the nineteenth century and not in the way the early propagators of 'national music' envisaged – another indication that cultural flows are not governed by political measures alone. The most intriguing and (at least until recently) least-researched aspect of the process is perhaps the change in musical sensibilities. As a result, most Japanese find much of the music that was played in Japan before the introduction of Western music just as jarring to their ears as any Western listener.⁵ If we accept neither Eurocentric assumptions about the universality and superiority of Western art music, nor explanations centring on asymmetrical power relations, how do we explain a phenomenon that seems no less intriguing for having parallels in other countries outside the Western world, most notably Korea, Taiwan and China? Several reasons can be given for the change, most importantly the dominance of Western music in the national education system to the almost complete exclusion of traditional musics until well into the twentieth century, as well as the enormous prestige enjoyed by Western music as a fundamental element of Western civilization and modernization, which were closely linked in most people's minds. There is remarkably little published research in English (or German) on the subject of Western art music in Japan (and the other East Asian countries for that matter),⁶ despite the undisputed importance of Japanese as players, teachers and consumers as well as producers of musical instruments and audio technology.⁷ Among mainstream musicologists, the notion that Western art music somehow belongs to the West may no longer be consciously embraced, but it nevertheless appears hard to shake off, judging from the fact that scholars still see the need to reassert

³ Karl Signell, 'The Modernization Process in Two Oriental Music Cultures: Turkish and Japanese', *Asian Music* 7/2 (1976): 72–102, here 72. See also James Parakilas, 'Classical Music as Popular Music', *The Journal of Musicology* 3/1 (1984): 1–18.

⁴ Jürgen Osterhammel, *Die Verwandlung der Welt: Eine Geschichte des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2009): 82 (author's translation).

⁵ CHIBA Yūko, *Doremi o eranda nihonjin* [When the Japanese chose 'do re mi'] (Tokyo: Ongaku no Tomosha, 2007).

⁶ A rare exception is Yayoi Uno Everett and Frederick Lau, eds, *Locating East Asia in Western Art Music* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2004).

⁷ Cyril Ehrlich describes the emergence of Japan as a leading manufacturer of pianos as 'the most significant development in modern piano history'. See Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990 (1976)): 195.

this observation.⁸ Ethnomusicologists and specialists of Japan, on the other hand, have tended to be more interested in indigenous genres or else modern popular music. The stereotype of the Japanese merely imitating Western models may also be a reason that may have contributed to the limited attention paid by Western researchers to the introduction of Western art music in Japan. Such major works that exist have tended to focus on the official importation of music, particularly singing in schools.⁹ Luciana Galliano, the author of the most recent comprehensive monograph on Western art music in Japan, examines composers and their works.¹⁰

Research published by Japanese scholars has (predictably) been more comprehensive and varied, particularly in the last twenty years or so.¹¹ Among the best comprehensive treatments in recent years are those by TSUKAHARA Yasuko (the author of the first article in this issue) and NAKAMURA Kōsuke.¹² A groundbreaking feature of Tsukahara's work is that she examined musical activities (*ongaku katsudō*), that is the creation, performance and consumption of music, and compared and contrasted the reception of Western music with that of Ming-Qing music (*minshingaku*), a type of popular music from China that came to Japan via Nagasaki in the early nineteenth century and enjoyed immense popularity until the time of the first Sino-Japanese war, after which it never quite regained its previous place in musical life. Nakamura's work includes a detailed treatment of the reception of knowledge about Western music in the Edo or Tokugawa period (1603–1868); and his final chapter, on the non-governmental import of Western music, indicates that he too intended to go beyond the treatment of the official introduction by the Meiji

⁸ Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Picador, 2007): 562–7; Michael P. Steinberg, 'Afterword: Whose Culture? Whose History? Whose Music?', in *The Oxford Handbook of the New Cultural History of Music*, ed. Jane F. Fulcher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 550–61, here 552.

⁹ Useful, if brief, older overviews are NOMURA Kōichi, 'Occidental Music', in *Japanese Music and Drama in the Meiji Era*, ed. KOMIYA Toyotaka (Tokyo: Ōbunsha, 1956): 451–507; William P. Malm, 'The Modern Music of Meiji Japan', in *Tradition and Modernization in Japanese Culture*, ed. Donald Shively (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971): 257–300. The most comprehensive treatment of the significant contributions by German and Austrian musicians in Japan is still Irene Suchy, 'Deutschsprachige Musiker in Japan vor 1945: Eine Fallstudie eines Kulturtransfers am Beispiel der Rezeption abendländischer Musik' (PhD diss., University of Vienna, 1992). For the education system, see Ury Eppstein, *The Beginnings of Western Music in Meiji Era Japan* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1994). Recent overviews include Bonnie C. Wade, *Music in Japan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Judith Ann Herd, 'Western-influenced "classical" music in Japan', in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music*, ed. Alison McQueen Tokita and David W. Hughes (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008): 363–381.

¹⁰ Luciana Galliano, *Yōgaku: Japanese Music in the Twentieth Century*, trans. Martin Mayes (Lanham, MD: The Scarecrow Press, 2002).

¹¹ A discussion of major works published before 1993 can be found in NAKAMURA Rihei, *Yōgaku dōnyūsha no kiseki: nihon kindai yōgakushi josetsu* [The tracks of those who introduced Western music: An introduction to the history of Western music in modern Japan] (Tokyo: Tōsui Shobō, 1993): 12–34.

¹² TSUKAHARA Yasuko, *Jūkyū seiki no nihon ni okeru sei'yō ongaku no juyō* [The reception of Western music in nineteenth-century Japan] (Tokyo: Taka Shuppan, 1993), NAKAMURA Kōsuke, *Kindai nihon yōgaku josetsu* [Western music in modern Japan: An introduction] (Tokyo: Tōkyō Shoseki, 2003).

government and examine further the reception of Western music among the population.¹³

Examples of work reflecting the effort to move beyond the focus on Japan and Tokyo include ISHIDA Kazushi's comparative treatment of modern and contemporary music in Japan, China and Korea, which centres on composers and their works.¹⁴ Other authors have drawn attention to the musical culture outside Tokyo, namely the Kansai region around Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe where musical activities of all kinds are particularly well documented.¹⁵

The intriguing and complex question of the Japanese people's changing musical sensibilities in the process of making Western music their own has been examined by CHIBA Yūko, who has examined the complex interactions between Western and traditional Japanese music and the processes by which Western music became more familiar to Japanese ears than traditional Japanese music.¹⁶

The Traditional Music of Japan and the Introduction of Western Music

The period from the enforced opening of Japan in the 1850s to around the First World War or, more narrowly, the Meiji era (1868–1912) is generally treated as the period of introduction or 'reception' of Western music.¹⁷ Government policies were decisive in this period, although by the end of the nineteenth century non-official initiatives and the assimilation of Western music, particularly in popular songs, gained significance. Japan had already encountered Western music in the sixteenth century, brought to them by Jesuit missionaries; but the ban on Christianity and the expulsion of foreigners (apart from a limited presence of Dutch traders in Nagasaki) put an end to this first encounter.¹⁸ Scholars have debated whether this early encounter facilitated the adoption of Western music in the mid-nineteenth century. There is little evidence to support this view, and

¹³ The completion of Nakamura's work was interrupted by his untimely death. He is also the author of a major work on the reception of Western music in modern Japanese literature: Kōsuke NAKAMURA, *Seiyō no oto, Nihon no mimi: Kindai bungaku to seiyō ongaku* [Western sounds, Japanese ears: modern Japanese literature and Western music] (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2002 (1987)).

¹⁴ ISHIDA Kazushi, *Modanizumu hensōkyoku: Higashi Ajia no kindai ongakushi* [Variations on the theme of modernism: The history of modern and contemporary music in East Asia] (Tokyo: Sakuhokusha, 2005).

¹⁵ For example Hiroshi WATANABE, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi* [Japanese culture: a modern rhapsody] (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 2002). Some of the many sources on musical culture have been published in two volumes: Ōsaka Ongaku Daigaku Ongaku Bunka Kenkyūsho, ed., *Ōsaka ongaku bunkashi shiryō: meiji/taishō hen* [Materials relating to the history of musical culture in Osaka: Meiji and Taisho eras] (Ōsaka: Ōsaka Ongaku Daigaku, 1968), and *Ōsaka ongaku bunkashi shiryō: shōwa hen* [Materials relating to the history of musical culture in Osaka: Showa era] (Osaka: Ōsaka Ongaku Daigaku, 1970). See also Alison Tokita, 'Takarazuka and the Musical, *Modan* in the Hanshin Region 1914–1942', in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, ed. Roy Starrs (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 408–27.

¹⁶ Chiba, *Doremi o eranda nihonjin*.

¹⁷ The expression *juyō* [reception] is the one most commonly used in Japan to describe the introduction of Western music to Japan, although some authors use *dōnyū* [introduction, importation].

¹⁸ A detailed treatment of this period can be found in Eta Harich-Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973). For literature on the nineteenth century, see below in this section.

the question seems of limited significance. In the sixteenth century, Japan's rulers had powerful reasons for keeping the foreigners (and their music) out; in the nineteenth century, they had equally powerful reasons for letting them in.

Eta Harich-Schneider, the author of the first comprehensive history of music in Japan in English, observed that Japan's confrontation with Western art music in the nineteenth century 'took place at a moment when the contrast [with its indigenous music] was at its strongest'.¹⁹ The nineteenth-century Western idea of 'absolute music', she claims, had no equivalent in Japan.²⁰ Nineteenth-century Western attitudes towards the composer and his work were alien to the Japanese.

In fact, the very concept of 'music' had little meaning to most Japanese: the word *ongaku* for 'music' only gained currency when it came to be used as a Japanese translation for the Western word, and today Japanese people still tend to associate it with Western music. The different musical genres each had their own names and social settings; Ruth Finnegan's term 'musical worlds' might describe the musical landscape of early modern Japan.²¹ Certainly, the custom of ethnomusicologists to speak of 'musics' in the plural would seem to reflect common Japanese perceptions of music before *ongaku* became a current term.

The difference in the sound of Western in contrast to indigenous Japanese music may well have been at its greatest in the mid-nineteenth century; both musical traditions had developed independently of each other and seemed thoroughly incompatible to all contemporaries but the most determined Japanese propagators of a 'national music' based on synthesis. This gradually changed. Music in the West from the end of the nineteenth century was characterized by rising levels of dissonance, as composers strove to overcome conventional tonality. The musical soundscape became more and more diverse as the development of transport and sound technology increased opportunities for musical encounters. Japanese musicians in the traditional genres could not escape the influence of Western music and did not necessarily wish to. But in the early phase of introduction, until the beginning of the twentieth century, Japanese students mainly encountered Western music through their Western (most often German or Austrian) teachers, and these tended to represent and propagate the classical tradition rather than the cutting edge of musical exploration, at least in the nineteenth century.

Even before the encounter with the West, music in Japan owed much to outside influence from the Asian continent; but by the nineteenth century these imports had long been assimilated and were not perceived as foreign.²²

¹⁹ Harich-Schneider, *History of Japanese Music*, 546.

²⁰ She may be overstating her case; see Tokita, 'Takarazuka and the Musical', 413.

²¹ See Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). Finnegan uses the term to describe musical activities in different genres of Western music in one location; with modifications, it describes the situation in Japan quite well. An example of connections between the worlds would be the 'intertextuality' in the theatrical arts; see Wade, *Music in Japan*, 79–130.

²² The first major scholarly history of Japanese music by a Western scholar is Harich-Schneider, *History of Japanese Music*. Recent treatments of traditional music in Japan in English include William P. Malm, *Traditional Japanese Music and Musical Instruments*, rev. ed. (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 2000); Hugh de Ferranti, *Japanese Musical Instruments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Robert C. Provine, Yosihiko TOKUMARU and J. Lawrence Witzleben, eds, *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Vol 7: East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*

Gagaku, the orchestral music of the imperial court and certain shrines, came to Japan between the seventh and the ninth centuries, and while it has changed over the centuries it can still claim to be one of the world's oldest continuous orchestral traditions.²³ Other genres likewise have roots on the Asian continent, even if they originated in Japan. It was in the course of the Edo period that the different musics crystallized into the separate genres identified today.²⁴ They included *shōmyō* (Buddhist chant), *kagura* (music performed at Shintō shrines) and the accompanying music of the *nō*, *kabuki* and *bunraku* theatres, as well as various styles of recitation and song to the accompaniment of the *biwa* (plucked lute), *shamisen* (three-stringed plucked lute) and *koto* (plucked zither) and purely instrumental genres. Like Tokugawa society itself, music was highly stratified. The *biwa*, *koto*, *kokyū* (bowed lute) and *shamisen* were often (though not exclusively) played by blind musicians organized in special guilds with official support. Playing the *shakuhachi* was, at least in theory, restricted to members of the Zen Buddhist Fuke sect, although it continued to be played by laypeople. Several styles were associated with the pleasure quarters. The common people enjoyed folk songs (*min'yō*) and other folk performing arts (*minzoku geinō*). The Ainu in the north of Japan and the Okinawans in the south also each had their own musical traditions.

Only a short characterization of Japanese music can be given here.²⁵ Scales and modes vary among the different genres. Vertical harmony is rarely used; instruments playing together tend to play in a kind of loose unison, or with a melody and counter-melody. Apart from dance music, the rhythm is often quite free, while the timing or the space between sounds (*ma*) holds particular significance. An important difference from Western music lies in what is considered a beautiful sound: unlike the Western *bel canto* tradition with its ideal of pure notes, the unstable pitch of a twanging string or the sound of blowing mixed with the note of a *shakuhachi* are essential ingredients of the music; the skilled musician creates variety by subtly changing timbres. Moreover, in contrast to the passionate expression of the Classical and particularly Romantic music of Europe, most Japanese music lacked overt emotional expression; sober refinement or decorum characterized the performance of the most highly regarded music.

More than the nature of the music itself, it was the circumstances of performance, the mechanisms of transition and the lack of a comprehensive theory of music or a universal system of notation that made Japanese music appear unsuited to the demands of the modern nation-state. Its different musical genres were highly context-bound, played by different social groups in different settings, most of them small and intimate (with the possible exceptions of the theatre and the *gagaku* orchestra and music played at festivals). Japan knew hardly any large-scale public performances comparable to the symphony concert or the military parade, except for some of the larger festivals, which were,

(New York: Garland, 2002); Tokita and Hughes, *Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music*. Treatments of individual instruments include Henry Johnson, *The Shamisen: Tradition and Diversity* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

²³ William P. Malm, 'The Special Characteristics of Gagaku', in *Gagaku: Court Music and Dance*, ed. Masataro TOGI (Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1971): 3–25, here 5.

²⁴ Galliano, *Yōgaku*, 16.

²⁵ Based on David W. Hughes and Alison McQueen Tokita, 'Context and Change in Japanese Music', in *Ashgate Research Companion to Japanese Music*, 18–27.

however, restricted to certain days of the year and thus more clearly separated from everyday life. Transmission was by ear, from teacher to pupil. It was commonly organized in the so-called *iemoto* system of fictive family ties, with a hereditary master as the 'head of house' (*iemoto*) ensuring the continuation of the lineage or school (Japanese *ryūha*). Licensed members of the school assumed a professional name (*natori*), part of which was the name of the school. The *iemoto* system was particularly marked in the elite genres described as 'Japanese classical music' (*Nihon koten ongaku*), including several of the recital and instrumental genres as well as the *nō* and *kabuki* theatre, and prevails to this day in other traditional arts besides music and in the martial arts.

Western music, on the other hand, came to Japan complete with a culture that included large-scale performances, suitable for displays of power and for uniting large groups of people. It had a system of transmission that enabled teaching groups such as school classes, and a theoretical framework and vocabulary to enable intellectual discussions about the nature and functions of music in the abstract (as opposed to certain kinds of music).

The first military bands in Japan were already formed in the years after Commodore Perry had forced the government of the Tokugawa shoguns to conclude a treaty with the United States in 1854. After the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the imperial government that replaced that of the shoguns created a national conscript army and navy, each with their own bands and foreign musical directors. Military bands played for official ceremonies and gave public performances. Once retired from active service, military musicians often formed their own bands and performed and taught civilians; they thus contributed significantly to the dissemination of Western music. The *gagaku* musicians of the imperial court were also among the earliest students and performers of Western music. The Meiji government reorganized the practice of *gagaku*, which, like military music, was performed on ceremonial occasions. From the mid-1870s musicians of the imperial court received training in Western music as well as *gagaku*; they gave their first performance of Western music on 3 November 1876, as part of the celebrations for the emperor's birthday.

Nominally, the introduction of music into the education system started with the Education Law of 1872, which stipulated universal compulsory schooling and laid the foundations for a centralized modern education system. But it was not until the establishment of the Music Study Committee (*Ongaku Torishirabe Gakari*),²⁶ in 1879, and the employment of the American Luther Whiting Mason (1818–96), that efforts to put the law into practice began in earnest. Teacher training began in 1880 and the first songbook for use in schools was published in 1881. Mason was dismissed in 1882 and was succeeded by Franz Eckert (1852–1916) and Guillaume Sauvlet (1843–after 1898; in Japan 1885–9), both of whom had other commitments and taught part-time. Eckert's main appointment was as musical director of the navy band from 1879, and he also taught the *gagaku* musicians; he remained in Japan until 1899. After a brief spell in Germany, he went to Korea in 1901, where he played a similar pioneering role in introduction of Western music. In 1887 the Music Study Committee was elevated to the Tokyo School of Music (*Tōkyō Ongaku Gakkō*),²⁷ the forerunner of today's

²⁶ Renamed Ongaku Torishirabe Sho (Institute of Music) from February to December 1885.

²⁷ Known in English as the Tokyo Academy of Music during the Meiji period.

music faculty at Tokyo University of the Arts. The following year Rudolf Dittrich (1861–1919), who had graduated from the conservatoire in Vienna, was employed full time. His appointment reflected the ambition to develop Western music as an art form to the highest level; Dittrich was an outstanding performer on the piano and violin, and he played in 50 concerts during his six-year tenure. In 1889 KōDA Nobu (1870–1946), the daughter of a former vassal of the shogun, became the first student sent abroad by the government to study music.²⁸ The Tokyo School of Music trained teachers who were employed in the nation's schools and staged concerts. The first symphony orchestra was formed with students and teachers, with reinforcements from the military bands (the academy did not yet train wind players), and they performed under successive foreign musical directors. The foreign teacher credited with establishing the first full symphony orchestra at the Tokyo School of Music is August Junker (1868–1944), who taught from 1898 to 1912 (he returned to Japan in 1934 and taught at the private Musashino Academia Musicae).

From the end of the nineteenth century on, the dissemination of Western music progressed rapidly, with the proliferation of public concerts, the manufacture of musical instruments (including Suzuki violins and Yamaha reed-organs; both were distributed nationwide from 1890), the establishment of commercial bands, the publication of music magazines and the proliferation of popular songs that combined elements of Western and traditional music. While government efforts were decisive particularly in the early stages and in Tokyo, Christian missionaries and foreign professionals who came to Japan independently of official channels, as well as foreign amateurs and Japanese individuals played important roles in this process.²⁹

By the early twentieth century Japan was already contributing to the dissemination of Western music in other East Asian countries. Chinese students flocked to Japan after Japan's military victory over the country in 1895, and the introduction of Western music in Taiwan and Korea owes much to Japanese colonization (as well as to Christian missionaries).³⁰ During the First World War, Suzuki and Yamaha exported their musical instruments to foreign markets previously served by Germany. By the 1920s the practice of Western art music had reached a level 'approaching that of some of the musically less-developed countries in Europe'.³¹ But that is already the story of the twentieth rather than the nineteenth century.

²⁸ Margaret Mehl, 'A Man's Job? The Kōda Sisters, Violin Playing and Gender Stereotypes in the Introduction of Western Music in Japan', *Women's History Review* 21/1 (2012): 101–20.

²⁹ Of particular importance for the Kansai region was the Austrian conductor and composer Josef Laska (1886–1964), who conducted the Takarazuka Symphony Orchestra from 1924 to 1935; see Suchy, 'Deutschsprachige Musiker in Japan', 167–84; NEGISHI Kazumi, *Yōsefu rasuka to takarazuka kōkyō gakudan* [Josef Laska and the Takarazuka Symphony Orchestra] (Osaka: Ōsaka Daigaku Shuppankai, 2012); Tokita, 'Takarazuka and the Musical'.

³⁰ Sheila Melvin and Jindong Cai, *Rhapsody in Red: How Western Classical Music Became Chinese* (New York: Algora, 2004); Angela Hao-Chun Lee, 'The Influence of Governmental Control and early Christian Missionaries on Music Education of Aborigines in Taiwan', *British Journal of Music Education* 23/2 (2006): 205–16; Hio-Jin Kim, *Koreanische und westliche Musikerausbildung: Historische Rekonstruktion – Vergleich – Perspektiven* (Marburg: Tectum, 2000).

³¹ Galliano, *Yōgaku*, 94.

Overview of Articles

Research on music in Japan, whether by Japanese or foreign scholars, has tended to reflect the largely separate existence of Western and traditional Japanese music in Japan today, although Eta Harich-Schneider in her ground-breaking work devotes a short chapter to the encounter between Western and Japanese music after the Meiji Restoration and the influence of the profound political, social and economic changes on traditional musical genres.³² In recent years the complex interactions between Japanese and Western music have attracted more attention from scholars. The articles in this issue reflect this trend as well as setting new standards.

In 'State Ceremony and Music in Meiji-era Japan', TSUKAHARA Yasuko, whose landmark history of the introduction of Western music in Japan is mentioned above, outlines the process by which *gagaku* was reworked, and its performance and repertoire reorganized, in the 1870s. A new tradition was created, giving *gagaku* a central function in court ceremonial as part of the modern emperor state. Moreover, *Gagaku* musicians played a vital role in the introduction of Western music, which a group of them studied from 1874, in order to perform at Western-style ceremonies for visiting foreign dignitaries. They composed works for military bands and songs for use in kindergarten and elementary school education. In Japan as in other non-Western countries, military bands were important in the introduction of Western music. In her discussion of military music, Tsukahara demonstrates the significance of new compositions by *gagaku* musicians and how they were subsequently altered under the guise of 'arrangements', resulting in works which, although they could be called 'Western-style', represented a new sound world that took on a Japanese flavour through the use of *gagaku* scales. *Gagaku* scales and the new *gagaku* sound are also evident in the songs composed for school ceremonies, and they formed a link between the musical languages of traditional court music and Western ceremonial music.

The court musicians in effect attained bi-musicality, a concept further explored in a recent article by Alison Tokita, who cites the *gagaku* musicians as an example, with reference to Tsukahara's pioneering study of the Meiji state and *gagaku*.³³

The role of *gagaku* musicians as composers of songs for use in the modern education system is further examined by Hermann Gottschewski in 'Nineteenth-Century *Gagaku* Songs as a Subject of Musical Analysis'. The songs were composed by legitimate members of the court music department in response to an official commission.³⁴ Unlike the policy-makers responsible for the introduction of Western music, the *gagaku* musicians had in-depth musical knowledge, even if their familiarity with Western music was limited. The songs they composed in order to meet the demand of the new, Western-inspired education system did not directly imitate the musical conventions of Western songs, but were nevertheless 'modern' in that they represented a response to Meiji Japan's

³² Harich-Schneider, *History of Japanese Music*, 533–97.

³³ Alison M. Tokita, 'Bi-musicality in modern Japanese culture', *International Journal of Bilingualism*, Online First (2012) doi:10.1177/1367006912458394. TSUKAHARA Yasuko, *Meiji kokka to gagaku: dentō no kindai, kokugaku no sōsei* [The Meiji state and Gagaku: Modernization of tradition/creation of national music] (Tokyo: Yūshisha, 2009).

³⁴ The *gagaku* songs for educational use are known as *hoiku shōka*, translated in this issue as 'childcare songs'. 'Children's education songs' might be less misleading.

modernization along Western lines. Gottschewski provides a detailed musical analysis, based on clearly defined concepts and parameters, of three *gagaku* songs that have a close intertextual relationship, and he examines the extent to which the composers were able to work creatively within a framework where several aspects of composition were given.

Like Tsukahara, Gottschewski reminds us that the introduction of Western music was more complex than the mainstream narrative suggests. Although later compilations of songs for schools contained mostly Western or Western-style songs, the early *gagaku* songs suggest that this was not inevitable.³⁵ The creation of what Tsukahara calls a '*gagaku* sound' in the early Meiji period might form the basis for further discussions of modernity and the search for a modern musical identity in the twentieth century.

The following two articles likewise examine connections between Western and Japanese music, this time with a focus on instrumental music, which has received far less attention from scholars than the history of educational and popular songs. The two case studies treat a Japanese and a Western instrument respectively: the *shakuhachi* (end-blown flute), the only traditional Japanese instrument (with the possible exception of *taiko* drums) with a significant following abroad, and the violin.

Kiku DAY's article, 'The Effect of the Meiji Government's Policy on Traditional Japanese Music During the Nineteenth Century: The Case of the *Shakuhachi*' treats the changing place of the *shakuhachi*, an instrument known in Japan since the eighth century, in the musical culture of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Two major changes resulting from the policies of the Meiji government influenced the fate of the *shakuhachi* decisively: secularization, which entailed the abolition of the monopoly held by mendicant monks of the Buddhist Fuke sect, and the privileging of Western music in the government's modernization project.

Despite official restrictions in the Edo period (1603–1868), the *shakuhachi* continued to be played as a secular instrument for entertainment and enjoyment, a trend that was strengthened once restrictions were lifted by the Meiji government. By examining publications for the *shakuhachi* from the late nineteenth century onwards, Day traces the development from a solo instrument and a tool for spiritual training to an ensemble instrument played on the concert stage. Players today are often unaware of the extent to which performance practices have changed in the course of a few decades. The influence of Western musical practices is most evident in the changing teaching practices, where oral transmission is supplemented or even substituted by the publication of manuals, often intended for self-study and the widespread use of printed sheet music. Other changes affected the repertoire, instrument-making and playing techniques.

One of the pioneers of a modern *shakuhachi* tradition was NAKAO Tozan (1876–1956), the founder of the Tozan School (in 1896) which is one of the two dominant *shakuhachi* schools today. He published a *shakuhachi* tutor for self-study in 1908 as well as sheet music, for both Japanese and Western pieces, for *shakuhachi*. Nakao, and another editor and publisher of sheet music for *shakuhachi*, MACHIDA Ōen (?–1928), also feature in 'A Lost Opportunity for Tradition: The Violin in Early Twentieth-Century Japanese Traditional Music',

³⁵ For an analysis of the songs in the three volumes of the collection of songs for elementary schools (*Shōgaku shōka shū*, 1881–84) see Eppstein, *The Beginnings of Western Music in Meiji Era Japan*, 93–113.

where KAJINO Ena investigates the dissemination of the violin and its influence on the teaching and performance of traditional music. Both Nakao and Machida produced printed editions of Japanese pieces for violin during the 'violin boom' of the early twentieth century. Kajino expands on some of the issues treated by Margaret Mehl in an earlier article in this journal,³⁶ and examines in detail the kinds of 'traditional Japanese music' played on the violin at the time. She shows how Western teaching practices and notation inspired innovations by performers of music for *koto*, *shamisen* and *shakuhachi*, and discusses the practice of *wayō gassō*, playing in mixed ensembles of Japanese and Western instruments, most often the violin.

Kajino asks the question that initially inspired Mehl's research into the history of the violin:³⁷ Why did the violin, described variously as an 'instrument of four continents'³⁸ and 'the world's most versatile instrument',³⁹ ultimately not establish itself in the traditional music of Japan in a way comparable to its history in Persia and parts of India? Kajino's and Mehl's answers, however, differ. Kajino concludes that the violin might well have achieved a niche in a traditional genre, had it been championed by a suitably charismatic *iemoto* founding a new school. Mehl, meanwhile, has come to the conclusion that the question itself needs to be questioned. Certainly, by the time of Miyagi's and Chemet's performance in 1932, discussed by Kajino (and Mehl), the distinction of 'traditional Japanese' and 'Western' was problematic, as the changing reception of Miyagi's composition *Haru no umi* (Sea in Springtime) demonstrates.⁴⁰ Kajino interprets this performance in the context of the earlier practice of *wayō gassō* and discusses why it did not inspire a revival of this practice.

Ultimately, after 1945, however, both Western art music and traditional Japanese music, the later often in the form of new traditions that evolved in the nineteenth century (such as those described by Day for the *shakuhachi*) and including some of the very genres previously despised as vulgar, were each set on their own pedestal and revered separately. To qualify for veneration as authentic traditions, both Western and Japanese music had to remain untainted by influence from each other (or at least be perceived as such).⁴¹ Meanwhile, the envisaged 'harmony' of Western and Japanese music arguably occurred in the kinds of music so despised by Meiji policy makers and intellectuals: musical genres for popular entertainment like film music and popular song (including samurai films and sentimental *enka* ballads), genres

³⁶ Margaret Mehl, 'Japan's Early Twentieth-Century Violin Boom', *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 7/1 (2010): 23–43.

³⁷ *The Violin in Japan: A History of Its Place in the Musical Culture, 1850–2000* (unpublished manuscript; provisional title).

³⁸ Peter Cooke, 'The violin: instrument of four continents', in *The Cambridge Companion to the Violin*, ed. Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992): 234–48.

³⁹ David Schoenbaum, *The Violin: A Social History of the World's Most Versatile Instrument* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2012).

⁴⁰ Discussed in WATANABE, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*, CHIBA, *Doremi o eranda nihonjin*, 5–6. See also Henry Johnson, 'A Modernist Traditionalist: Miyagi Michio, Transculturalism, and the Making of a Music Tradition', in *Rethinking Japanese Modernism*, ed. Roy Starrs (Leiden: Brill, 2012): 246–69.

⁴¹ WATANABE, *Nihon bunka modan rapusodi*, ii, 5–9.

that, for all their 'traditional' and local flavour, can be described as both modern and global.⁴²

As the articles in this issue show, however, this outcome of Japan's musical modernization was far from predetermined. The authors' contribution lies in shedding light on the different choices available during the process and highlighting possibilities which, although ultimately discarded or sidelined, nevertheless helped shape musical culture in Japan.

⁴² Tokita makes a similar point when she highlights the importance of film, light opera and dance music in helping Western music become 'naturalized' in the Kansai region; Tokita, 'Takarazuka and the Musical', 425.